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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON WAR IN IRAQ

Summary

-- Lead stories in all papers today, April 2, continue to focus on the developments in the war in Iraq. Banner headlines highlight the civilian death toll in Iraq. Al-Dustour, Al-Arab Al-Yawm and the Jordan Times carry a similar photo of a man crying and shouting as the bodies of three small children are placed in a coffin in front of him. All papers also highlight King Abdullah's meeting with his cabinet, during which he expressed reassurance about the Jordanian government's measures to protect Jordanians' safety and express concern for the rising number of civilian casualties among the Iraqi people. Papers also refer to the letter sent by U.S. Ambassador to Jordan, Edward Gnehm, to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, offering his condolences for the death of five Jordanians killed in Iraq.

Editorial Commentary

-- "Jews, Zionists, and the title is occupation"

Chief Editor Taher Udwan concludes his article on the back page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm (04/02): "For us Arabs, we view what is happening as yet another image of the invaders who crossed our lands in barbaric wars (whether holy or unholy wars). We realize that the invaders may eventually succeed, with the massive force they have, in entering the cities of Iraq, the Arab country that is standing alone without the support of any of its brothers. We realize that the occupation may succeed in occupying all of Iraq. However, they will fail, from day one, to be of an image other than that of occupiers, invaders, opportunists and criminals. This alone is sufficient to keep the resistance going even for the next one hundred years."

-- "The American crisis"

Daily columnist Fahd Fanek writes on the back page of semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai (04/02): "In the first week of the Anglo-American aggression against Iraq, focus was directed to military and leadership targets, in an efforts to convince the Iraqi people that the Americans and the English are launching their war against the regime and not the people. They had expected that the Iraqi people would view them as liberators rather than occupiers. Within the first week of launching the aggression, the American leadership became convinced that this vision does not exist, because the fierce Iraqi resistance faced by the invading forces was not only regular forces, but also included popular organizations. The Iraqi people, with all its sectors, rose in defense of his homeland.. As of the second week of the war, the American plans shifted and changed. They acknowledged that the forces are not enough . and most importantly they shifted from targeting the regime's institutions to striking popular markets and residential areas, in a clear attempt to avenge themselves against the Iraqi people. The Iraqis in 1991 were not completely convinced of the need to fight and sacrifice to keep Kuwait, as they were faced with the Arab and international public opinion and the thirty-country alliance supported by Arab and international communities. It really felt like a war to liberate Kuwait. However, in 2003, the picture is different. The Iraqis are defending their homeland against invaders and aggressors, whose intentions and objectives are as clear as day, and whose movements and plans are rejected both on the Arab and on the international levels."

GNEHM